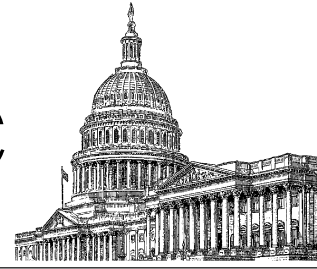


Dan Inouye

U.S. SENATOR FROM HAWAII



U.H. INNOVATION CONFERENCE THURSDAY, JANUARY 13, 2011

Congratulations Madame President on a most impressive line-up of speakers. Senior government, academic and business leaders—all opinion makers and innovation movers. To the members of the National Academies of Science, Welcome.

At the close of this conference, I hope you will come away with what I have always known. We have what it takes. We have the intellect, inquisitiveness, and an entrepreneurial know-how to invent and incubate a knowledge sector in Hawaii. We are leaders in astronomy, ocean sciences, health, and alternative energy. All are bolstered by our natural resources – a clear atmosphere and ocean, a mild climate to undertake research year round, and a diverse ethnic population.

Our major weakness is, at times, our own modesty and humility, as well as our distance from the research centers on the East Coast. This is where many of you can help immeasurably to serve as validators, advocates, and matchmakers with partners and capital.

Over these many years, I have been honored to support both the University of Hawaii's research endeavors, as well as encouraging the growth our Hawaii's technology sector. It is my hope that this conference will encourage a greater intersection and connection between the two.

My philosophy has been very simple – Build it, and they will come. Invest, and they will grow.

In 1997, the University of Hawaii opened its Pacific Ocean Science Technology building, or POST, at a cost of \$48 million (\$26 million from federal dollars). In November 2001, the University took possession of a \$54 million Navy-built oceanographic research vessel. With these assets, UH was able to recruit the best scientists and the brightest researchers to build an internationally renowned program. I would like to believe that it was key in landing one of 17 prestigious National Science Foundation Centers for Science and Technology in the area of oceanography. These centers are the “gold standard” in research. Build it, and they will come.

Haleakala and Mauna Kea are home to the world's most prestigious observatories. More than \$1 billion has been invested with an annual economic impact of about \$150 million annually. The mirror coating facility, the PanStarrs initiative funded at more than \$50 million to date, or most recently, the \$300 million Advanced Technology Solar Telescope slated for Haleakala. Each success builds on the other, enticing the world's most acclaimed astronomers to Hawaii. And now, the \$1.2 billion 30-Meter Telescope, destined for Mauna Kea, is in our sights. Build it, and they will come.

The same can be said for the investments made in Hawaii's growing technology companies. Today, many have budgeted programs of record, and are selling products and services in both the public and private sectors. Our companies have become increasingly competitive and sustainable. Invest, and they will grow.

Before I close, I would be remiss if I did not touch upon the most unfortunate failure of the Congress to pass an Omnibus spending bill in the waning days of the 2010 session and the issue of earmarks.

Let me be clear - since 2006, the Congress reduced spending on earmarks by nearly 75 percent. In total, the omnibus bill provided for less than $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1 percent of discretionary funding on earmarks. This tiny fraction of funds would have gone to support the needs of constituents and communities that were not funded by the Administration. The Omnibus cut a total of \$29 billion from the President's budget. We could have ended the year spending less, not more in 2011.

I submit to you that this debate was not about earmarks. Rather, it was about having the guts to stand up for the priorities of the Congress. It was about refusing to abdicate responsibility for providing oversight on the funding requests of the Executive Branch.

No Administration, whether Democrat or Republican, has a monopoly on good ideas and initiatives. The Maui Supercomputer began as an earmark in 1993 to support the Air Force operation atop Haleakala. Over the years, the University of Hawaii has done a fine job managing this asset, analyzing mountains of data to garner better space situational awareness for our national security. The Maui supercomputer was recently added into the Pentagon's budget with the other DOD supercomputers.

Had we not insisted that there was a valid defense requirement, which would also serve as a critical technology cornerstone for Hawaii, this would not have happened. This was a good investment.

The same can be said for the Joint Information Technology Center - started by a Native Hawaiian businessman and supported by earmarks. It provides an electronic means of ensuring that warriors' medical records follow them from the theater, to evacuation and ultimately, to medical facilities in the U.S. This system also tracks all critical medical resources, such as blood, bandages and medication, in the military inventory. And, all from Hawaii.

In 2010, it became a part of the Defense Department's annual budget request. Lives were no doubt saved, and lives will continue to be saved. This was a good investment.

As long as I am the Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I will fight for the Congress' prerogative and responsibility to make spending decisions in the best interest of our communities and our nation. It is the rightful duty of the Congress, as set forth by the U.S. Constitution.